



Dear Family & Friends,

1 December 2011

Hello and Seasons Greetings!!! Sorry it has been so long since I have sent a Holiday Letter. Warning: This letter might be a tad bit long winded since it's been so long. But don't we all love mail that is anything than bills or junk mail? Here you go! It's been a very interesting couple of years for sure with many changes, adjustments, ups, downs, heartaches, and blessings. I guess I will start with this just to get it out of the way and so everything else makes sense. Kim & I are now divorced (since 2009) and I moved to Utah in a state of shock. Thus here I am still, two years later. Life has definitely gotten better thru the last two years. I desperately miss Philadelphia and my life there, but slowly adjusting to Utah, but never conforming.

I now work at Zions Bancorp (the company that supports Zions Bank, Amegy Bank, California Bank & Trust, National Bank of Arizona, Nevada State Bank, The Commerce Bank of Oregon, The Commerce Bank of Washington, Contango, Vectra Bank, Zions Direct & Zions First National). I am currently working currently as a Principal Business Continuity Consultant in the Business Continuity & Resiliency Department. I work with a great team of people there and have enjoyed learning the new industry.

I also have a second job, working as a Real Estate Assistant for Notsil Properties. I really enjoy this position as well, it's a nationwide company and much more in line with my past experience, expertise and interests. I also have a great team of people that I work with here.

Last January I received a new calling at church that I LOVE! I'm a Young Women's Advisor with the South Davis Special Needs Mutual. It's the best calling I have ever had and they will have to pull me away kicking and screaming if they ever try to release me and/or I move... When I move (someday) I will just have to play my part in the new area and make sure that the program is extended there. ☺ Special Needs Mutual (SNM) has proven to be one of the very best blessings in my life! We meet every Thursday, give Sacrament Meeting Programs on the 2nd & 4th Sundays around the Region sharing who we are, what benefits that we provide to our members, sing, and share our testimonies. Each spring we put on a musical production/play. In June we go to Camp Zarahemla. I am constantly amazed and humbled by these sweet girls. I know that it's really me getting so much more out of each lesson and activity. I love walking thru the doors and feeling the amazing spirits of each one of our precious friends (ages 12-95) I love seeing their smiles, feeling their love, excitement and joy! If you ever have a day that you are struggling through, or just to need to feel a little love – this is definitely the place. My Love Tank definitely overflows every Thursday. I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn from them, to be around them, and to be their friend. It's not everyone who has the chance to hang out with people who have Celestial Spirits. They have taught me more about love, patience, endurance, and the love that our Savior has for each one of us – but specifically for them and for me.

I am currently attending a couple wards, my Family Ward (congregation) across the street from my home, and the Mid-Singles Ward (ages 31-45), and until I started at Zions I was participating at the Elderly Ward also across the street from me at the Assisted Living Center, all in addition to Special Needs Mutual. My calling with SNM doesn't interfere with any of these since it's a regional calling. How grateful I am though to a loving Bishop and Bishopric from my Family Ward. How incredibly grateful I am for the access to a Mid-Singles Ward! I didn't find this ward for about a year after I moved here, before that I had been struggling greatly in the family ward, not really having friends and feeling like I had the plague, it was really hard. The older singles ward has been such a blessing because of new friends, people closer to my age, who have been around the block a bit and that life hasn't always been peachy-keen for them as well, those who have more education and more professionals as well. This all in addition to the services and lessons more applicable (not on how this relates to my marriage or raising my children, etc.). Because of this great ward that is incredibly *large* (750+/- people just in my ward – there are 3 of these in the Salt Lake Valley alone!) I have had the opportunity to make new friends and have new adventures, memories, and a sense of belonging... how grateful I am!

I mentioned earlier that I had been volunteering at the assisted living home near my home. This too has been another tremendous blessing in my life! How I love these sweet brothers and sisters! I love the perspective that they bring and the love, gratitude and joy that they exuberate. While I was volunteering there in the ward helping to bring people to their church services and playing piano in their meetings, I started going over twice a month and giving little piano concerts for a few hours. Its official – I have a fan base besides my mother! ☺ They get so excited to see me and they all filter in just to listen on classical days or gather round the piano on sing-a-long days! How I love to see them get excited over the music and see their faces light up at a favorite song. I love having the opportunity to perform and continue to use the natural talent that my Heavenly Father gave me. Not to mention that it definitely strokes my ego to have my friends come up every five minutes to tell me how amazing I am.... Blessings of Alzheimer's! Ha ha ha This is another place to spend 5 minutes and again having your Love Tank overflow with love. In the past month though, I have had to stop performing there though, because I was getting so off balance and needing some personal time, yet my heart aches for them and when I can start playing again... (Here's to hoping it will be soon!)





Speaking of performing... I have also had the opportunity to start singing with the Mid-Singles Ward Choir & the Institute Choir! Its fun, sometimes challenging, and ultimately making a joyful noise! And of course our SNM Spring Productions (I did all the music for last year's production.☺) While none of these happen to be on Clarinet (the instrument that

I actually majored with and best at) it's been such a joy to have music in my life so much and for the opportunity to be a part of it.

I also have done a lot of volunteering with Utah Down Syndrome Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, SPLORE, Little Brothers & Little Sisters, Random 5K's and fundraisers, Festival of Trees, Utah Symphony, Utah Opera, Heritage Place Assisted Living, and more. I have also become more involved with physical fitness and nutrition, was able to participate in the Wasatch Front Corporate Games in multiple events (eight). I won a 5k Bike! I can run 2 miles! I ride my bike a ton up the mountain behind my house. I go for a lot of walks. I have gotten deeply into digital scrapbooking, ran my own business for a few years before shutting it down and starting at Zions, bought season tickets to the ballet, I read a ton (my record is four decent sized books in 1 week!) My life is definitely full of great experiences!

My favorite things about Utah are: I have regular visits from my Grandparents & Uncle Charles. It's been a pleasure building deeper and stronger relationships with each of them. The scenery really is beautiful, although I deeply miss the green lushness of the Mid-Atlantic and the oxygen at sea level! However, the weather here is really very temperate and they actually know how to plow snow! I also appreciate the performing arts, and large base of LDS Mid-Singles.

I have also decided to attempt blogging again. I'd love to have you follow me at www.jenniferadventures.wordpress.com.

As for my family... I'll let them really tell you their details but here is a quick snippet of their lives:

Nancy & Joe – doing much better! Dad has had 2 knee surgeries in the past year, but seems to be doing much better with the new knees along with the Physical Therapy. He is still working at the BLM. He also has gotten even more involved and excited with his new found hobby of making jewelry (He's gotten really good – hit him up for some unique and one of a kind statement jewelry!) Mom is doing much better as well, she has mostly recovered from her heart attack and shattered arm! She is also in Physical Therapy with dad. She graduated from school (she went back to increase her marketability). She also helps me at Notsil Properties with Negotiations. They sold Apollo our younger black stallion, but still have our sweet Ginger. We also lost our precious Black Lab Annie this year in a tragic accident. We miss both our Annie & Apollo. Overall it seems that both Mom & Dad are doing well and happy despite challenges and trials they have weathered them well.

Matthew - got married to our sweet new Sister-in-law **Diana Hall**.... And then they brought **our little Dean** into the world 10 months later! They live in St. George now and loving the area. They also have ventured out with Dish Network and have a dealership down there that they are enjoying.

Jeffrey - moved back down to Enoch from Ogden and has been a huge help with Mom and Dad, also with the property and the animals. He has also been helping out Matthew and working on his own ventures.

Grandma & Grandpa – are also doing well. Grandma is now 84 and Grandpa turning 81 in February. They are younger at heart and I swear in body then most people I know! They are still quick as whips and still busy as ever! Still pranksters and teases too. I absolutely enjoy having them around. I love seeing their faces light up when they see me. My favorite quote of Grandma's is when she's impressed with someone she goes up to them, turns on her charm batts her eyelashes and inquires if they are in need of a Grandma, because she's available. Ha ha

Uncle Charles – is still the glue of our whole family. How grateful I am to have an Uncle like him! I truly have been blessed by his presence and love in my life. He's still working for the city and making a huge difference there and in our community! I also have to mention that it's so nice being able to call upon him when I need help – that's something that I really took for granted before, all those years of having to hire out if I couldn't do something (which honestly isn't much I am his niece after all). But it sure has been really nice to have someone who knows how to do everything!

I hope that this Holiday Season is really good to you, and that the past few years have been good to you as well as the upcoming year. I pray that you and your family are incredibly blessed and know of the great love that our Savior has for you. (I know I'm sending this to friends of all religions and non-religious – but I believe and know this so dearly it's all from love from me too.) I am very sorry for not being in good communication with anyone for the past few years... always know that I love and care about you and have you all in my thoughts and prayers.

Happy Holidays; Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanza, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Santa Day, Happy New Year, Happy Chinese New Year, Happy Birthday to my fellow Capricorns, Happy Boxing Day, and everything in between that I missed. May you find Joy.

Love Always,

Jennifer Jenson-Valente